

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 164

By Tate

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of G.E. Patterson,
Founder, Presiding Bishop, and Chief Apostle of
the Temple of Deliverance Church of God in
Christ.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Bishop G.E. Patterson; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the elected representatives of the State of Tennessee should pause to pay tribute to those exemplary citizens who gave unselfishly of themselves, their time, and their talents to improve the quality of life for their fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Bishop G.E. Patterson was most assuredly one such remarkable citizen whose life and ministry demonstrated his unwavering commitment of service to the Lord and to the people whose spiritual lives he guided; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Patterson was the Founder, Presiding Bishop, and Chief Apostle of the Temple of Deliverance Church of God in Christ (COGIC), positions he held from his founding of the church in 1975; and

WHEREAS, described as “a great preacher, a pioneer of media ministries” at the Temple of Deliverance, Bishop Patterson will be sorely missed by his congregation, staff, and family; and

WHEREAS, during his thirty-two years of ministry at the Temple of Deliverance, Bishop Patterson led the church through many different phases of growth and development, both spiritually and physically; and

WHEREAS, three years after its founding, the church outgrew its facilities and built a 1,200-seat sanctuary; thanks to the diligence and hard work of the renowned Bishop Patterson, the Temple of Deliverance was Memphis’s first church built by African-American workers that cost more than a million dollars; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Patterson continued to nurture the Temple of Deliverance through its many changes in membership and facilities, and at the time of his death it had grown to more than 13,000 members; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Patterson was widely beloved as a charismatic leader of a global media empire that included television, radio, Internet, and publishing divisions; he was instrumental in growing the Church of God in Christ's ranks to more than 6.5 million members in fifty-eight countries; and

WHEREAS, lauded as a visionary, Bishop Patterson's influence extended beyond his Memphis pulpit; his Bountiful Blessings Ministries television program was broadcast worldwide, and he served as President of gospel radio station WBBP and as President of Podium Records; and

WHEREAS, Bishop G.E. Patterson made history within his denomination by unseating the then-Presiding Bishop and being elected to the office in 2000; it was the first time this had occurred since COGIC's founding in 1907; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Patterson began his service to his Lord and Savior at age seventeen when he preached his first sermon; he was ordained as a COGIC elder in 1958 and went on to become co-pastor at Holy Temple COGIC in Memphis before leaving to found Temple of Deliverance; and

WHEREAS, not content to become mired in the bureaucracy and isolation that had previously marked the role of Presiding Bishop, G.E. Patterson redefined the role with such practices as holding Bible studies during the annual convocations; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Patterson sought to be more accessible to his congregation and to return to the older days of the church by focusing on traditional Biblical teachings; those who knew him best say that his greatest attributes were his down-to-earth personality and his ability to make everyone with whom he came in contact feel special; and

WHEREAS, one of the millions of lives he touched was that of former Congressman Harold Ford, Jr., who upon Bishop Patterson's passing said, "America lost an angel today"; and

WHEREAS, Bishop G.E. Patterson was most appreciative of the love, devotion, and constant support that he received from his wife, Louise; and

WHEREAS, Bishop G.E. Patterson epitomized the spirit of giving and the level of commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Bishop G.E. Patterson, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, immeasurable influence as a Christian leader, and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with faith, courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Bishop Patterson.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.